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THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

May 14, 2007

Mr. David Aguilar  
Chief  
U.S. Border Patrol  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington DC, 20229

Dear Chief Aguilar,

I appreciate that you are, thus far, honoring our agreement that no permanent checkpoint will be planned or built in the Tucson Sector until we have received and considered comments and recommendations from residents, businesses and organizations in the I-19 corridor. The Community Workgroup on Southern Arizona Checkpoints has met once and we are beginning to gather important information from those who live and work in the area. There is another meeting of the Workgroup on May 14 at which time the individuals who went to Laredo will report on their tour of the checkpoint there. The Border Patrol leadership in the Tucson Sector, including Chief Robert Gilbert, are fully engaged.

While the Workgroup discussion about a permanent checkpoint will be the focus of several more meetings, there is a more immediate issue that was the paramount concern at the group's first meeting: an increase in violence along the I-19 corridor. Enclosed with this letter are relevant newspaper articles that explain the situation. In summary, people who live in proximity to the temporary checkpoint on I-19 are becoming more and more concerned about their safety.

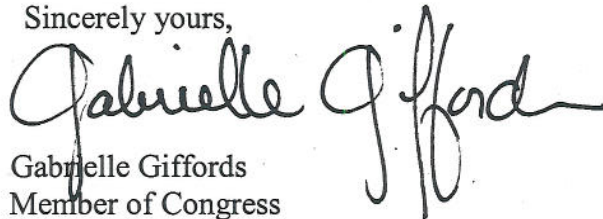
Some members of the Community Workgroup have reported that drug and human smugglers are circumventing the temporary checkpoint and invading neighborhoods. Residents are experiencing threats to their homes and neighborhoods. There has been violence apparently related to drug and human traffickers – many have been killed or wounded in what appears to be a war among drug smugglers. This is completely unacceptable and local law enforcement cannot be expected to manage the problem alone.

It is necessary that the Border Patrol give immediate attention to the concerns and problems that have resulted from the current checkpoint arrangement. I am requesting that you take a number of steps to provide for community safety. First, there is need for more border patrol agents to staff the current I-19 checkpoint and to be present in the neighborhoods. The Border Patrol must also establish a fast response system for residents to use when they need emergency assistance. Second, the Border Patrol must deploy sensors, radar, cameras and other technology to identify those who are going around the checkpoint so that agents can be quickly dispatched to intercept and apprehend these individuals.

And finally, beyond the steps that must be taken to address the neighborhood safety issues, I ask you make it a priority to move the temporary checkpoint to another location where the impact on residents and businesses can be reduced.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gabrielle Giffords". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Gabrielle Giffords  
Member of Congress